YCN
Tatchero

Tatchero is the collective name of a remarkable group of Nigerian artists and educators at work at the intersection of art, community advocacy, and empowerment, focusing on African identity, its culture, its history, mythology, and contemporary drama. We are very glad to present the group and its work in discussion with Gabriel, a founding member and "leader" of the determinedly leaderless group. Starting with an iPhone 5, Gabriel was an early practitioner of phone photography as an artist's tool and the group's work continues as iPhone-only photography and film-making. For Tatchero, the equipment's "limitations" are assets that make it immediate, accessible, and uniquely flexible as a storyteller's tool.

These images prove that creativity doesn't require permission or expensive tools—only purpose, connection, and impact. For Tatchero, each photograph is a collaboration, sometimes involving a large group of participants, that bridges art and activism—centering on underrepresented voices and addressing urgent issues such as lack of clean water, inequality, and identity erasure. The work is honest without being cynical, intimate without being invasive, and executed with both skill and genuine affection for its subjects.

It's said that good art educates, bad art mis-educates. Photography of Africa has too often been extractive and exoticizing, meaningful only to viewers who have never set foot in these spaces. But this artwork skillfully tells African stories in a way that demands real involvement. Tatchero's lessons reward a viewer's willingness to look without assumptions and encourages them to see Africa in its own variety, color, energy, and time.

Dek Unu Magazine

Cover: Tatchero

I picked up my iPhone with one goal in mind—to prove, first to myself and then to the world, that greatness doesn't come from gear, it comes from vision. The shoot was set: stylist ready, creative director in place, model prepared to embody a god. And then—out of nowhere—a friend strolled up with a smirk.

"Hey," he said, "I've seen you work magic with an iPhone X, but imagine what you could do with an iPhone 11." Then, like a plot twist, he handed me his phone. Just like that, destiny had upgraded my toolkit.

What followed felt bigger than photography. We weren't just creating a portrait; we were summoning Amun-Ra himself—the Egyptian god of air and sun, patron of Thebes, one of the most powerful deities of ancient times. The energy on set shifted, almost like the god himself had shown up to watch us work.

And me? I was just a stubborn dreamer with a borrowed iPhone 11, standing in the middle of history, channeling light into a frame.

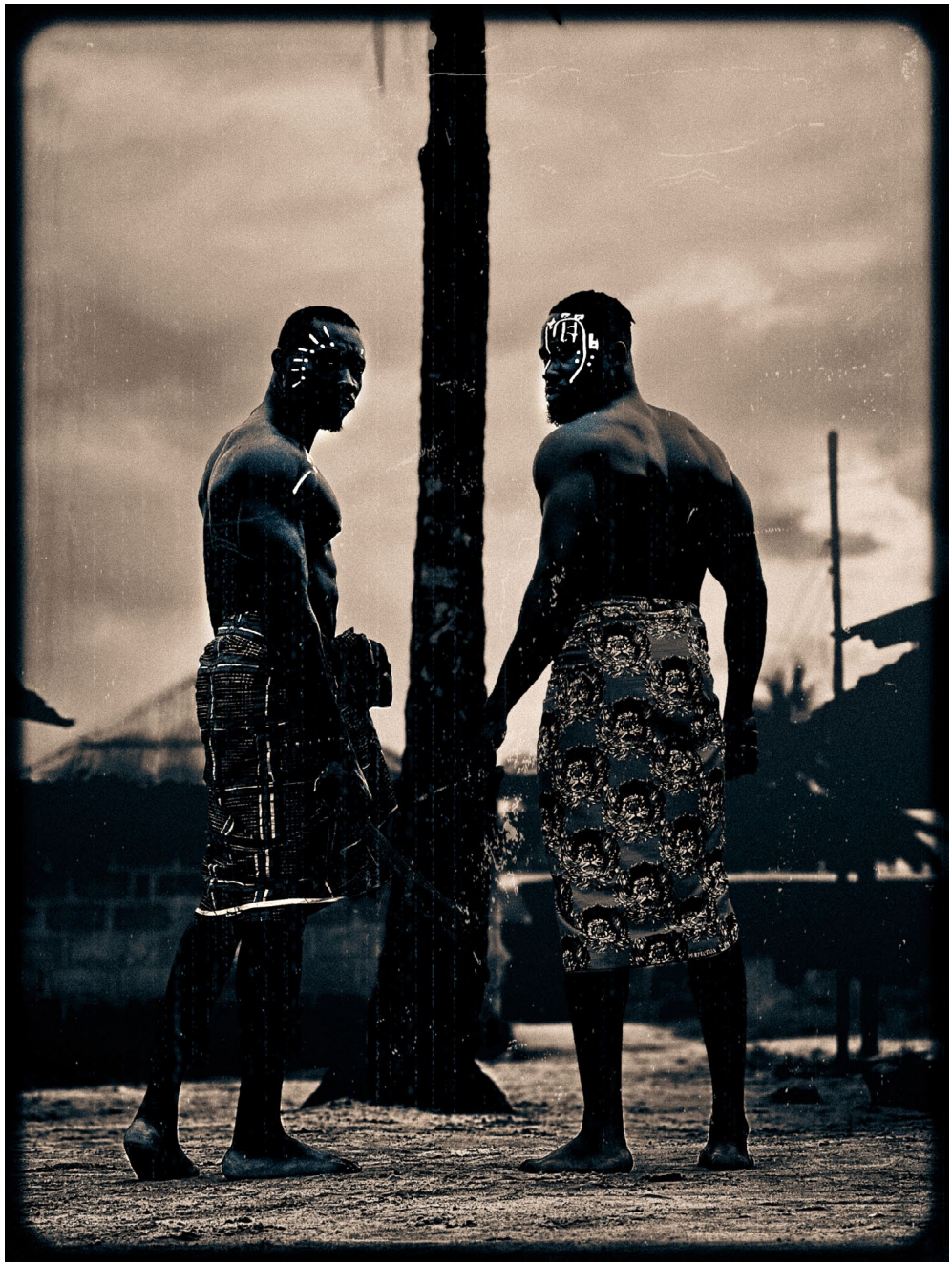
Okay, real talk, every pic has a story, but some? Some demand blood, sweat, and maybe a few mosquito bites before they finally show their true selves. And "The Black Serpent Goddess"? Yeah, that was definitely one of those moments.

We were chasing this vision of something super raw, spiritual, totally tapped into ancient African vibes. Finding the perfect spot? Not a walk in the park. We ended up deep, deep in the bush, literally hacking away at fresh bamboo to build this tiny, makeshift shade. And those giant leaves, though beautiful, left us itching for hours. It was a savage reminder that if you want to create something epic, you gotta put in the work, you gotta make some sacrifices.

Once we finally set the stage, painting the model's body became a whole ceremony in itself. There was laughter, music bumping, and this insane, unspoken energy that just happens when people come together to create art. The outcome? A striking, almost haunting embodiment of Oduda—the Black Serpent Goddess herself.

Oduda, for those not in the know, is one of those seriously powerful African deities, worshipped back in the day in Benin, Yoruba, and Dahomey traditions. Her name literally translates to "The Black One," and yeah, she rolls as a serpent. She's also got deep ties to sacred rites that crossed oceans, landing in the Caribbean. Her story screams power, transformation, and that divine feminine energy—a living testament to how African spirituality has traveled, survived, and totally adapted across generations and continents.

Looking back, all the itching, the sweat, the hours of prep—it all just fed into the final image. What we created wasn't just a photograph; it was a bridge, connecting the gritty struggle of that moment with the heavy, spiritual weight of an ancient goddess. It was intense, it was real, and it was worth every single itch.



The Women's War of 1929 was not just an event—it was a fire that reshaped history. Imagine women, armed with nothing but courage, standing up to the colonial system that tried to choke them with unjust taxes. Now imagine the men hired to silence them—Okugo's guards—muscle and menace working for the British. That's the tension this piece carries.

Every detail in this frame mattered. The costumes weren't just fabric, they were echoes of the past. The body paint wasn't decoration, it was armor. As we recreated that moment, you could almost hear the chants, the defiance, the unshakable voices of women refusing to bow.

The scene was raw. Guards advancing, women holding their ground, the air thick with the kind of fear that turns into bravery. In the real story, the women were eventually overpowered, chased, forced to flee for their lives. But their retreat was not defeat—it was a seed. A seed that grew into resistance, into history, into legacy.

Shooting it on an iPhone might sound odd, almost irreverent, but it was deliberate. The same way those women fought with whatever they had, we told their story with what we had. No excuses. Just purpose.

This isn't just a photograph—it's a fragment of memory stitched back into the present. A reminder that the voices of the silenced always find a way to speak again.

So I was invited to this African-themed shrine event, vibes already high. Think drums, colors, ancestral energy—the kind of place where creativity just leaks from the walls. But here's the catch: entry was only for people with "professional cameras."

I roll up with my iPhone, chest out like, "Yeah, let's do this." The security guy takes one look at me, then at my phone, and hits me with the most disrespectful head shake ever. "Nope." Just like that. Man really blocked me like I was trying to sneak into a club with a fake ID.

For a second, I just stood there, low-key embarrassed but also laughing inside. Like—imagine getting bounced not because of your outfit, but because your camera is too humble. But here's the thing: I hadn't come all that way just to get clowned at the gate.

And then, plot twist—the organizer, the same one who had invited me and even called me a "game-changer," spots me outside. Man nearly chokes. "Why are you still out here?" he asks. I just lift my phone up like it's contraband. He cracks up, waves me in, and suddenly the same energy that shut me out is ushering me in like royalty.

Inside? Pure magic. Models moving like living sculptures, colors exploding everywhere, culture heavy in the air. That's where "Woman of Color" was born—bold, radiant, unapologetically African.

And every time I think back, I remember that moment at the gate. How one second you're "not enough," and the next, you're exactly what the room was waiting for. Sometimes the world will try to keep you outside—but if your vision is undeniable, trust me, the doors will open.

Back when I was still working offshore in the oil and gas sector, life was all about schedules, delays, and the constant hum of helicopters. But on the days when the chopper kept us waiting and we had to take those super-fast boats instead, something magical always happened.

Just before boarding, I'd see them—boys by the seaside, running wild, laughing loud, chasing each other with the kind of freedom that money can't buy. Their bare feet slapped against the wet sand, their eyes gleamed like they were in on a secret I hadn't figured out yet. And every time I saw them, I couldn't help but think: here I was, a man with "privilege," chasing careers and deadlines, yet they—these boys—seemed freer than I ever was.

It made me pause. It made me imagine.

Imagine Africa stripped of its colors. No red roses. No blue waters. No yellow sun or orange sand. No green trees, no brown eyes.

Imagine a rainbow erased from the sky.

Unthinkable, right? Yet that's the power of this continent—the hues, the vibrance, the spirit that refuses to fade. Those boys on the shore weren't just playing. They were living proof that the true colors of Africa don't come from privilege or wealth. They come from freedom, from joy, from the raw, unfiltered beauty of simply being.

Don't think—just imagine.

They say, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. I used to nod politely when I heard that. Until the day I found myself on the ground, body shutting down, courtesy of a snake that didn't give a damn about my photography dreams.

I was deep in the islands, camera in hand, with the team, chasing beauty the way I always do— through mud, across rickety wooden bridges, brushing past bushes that whispered with insects. Just as I took this image, it happened! A sharp sting. Heat racing through my veins. Darkness.

The next time my eyes opened, two days had vanished. I was no longer in the wild but on a bed, surrounded by local women—the kind who carry centuries of healing in their hands. They had pulled me back from the edge, whispering prayers and mixing remedies while I hovered between worlds. To this day, I still don't know what was stronger: the venom or their will to keep me alive.

And so, these lands marked me.

I've chewed bitter sticks and swallowed venom's memory. Licked raw honey, nearly choked on fried termites. Crossed wooden bridges that swayed like they were drunk. Felt the salty ocean slap my face and the cold breeze kiss my skin. Danced under moonlight songs, sat on turtle shells like thrones, hunted by crabs and cursed by mosquitoes.

Adventure carved its initials on my body that day. And though the scar doesn't show, every time I pick up my camera, I feel it: the reminder that these lands don't just give you pictures—they claim a piece of you in return.

Tatcher

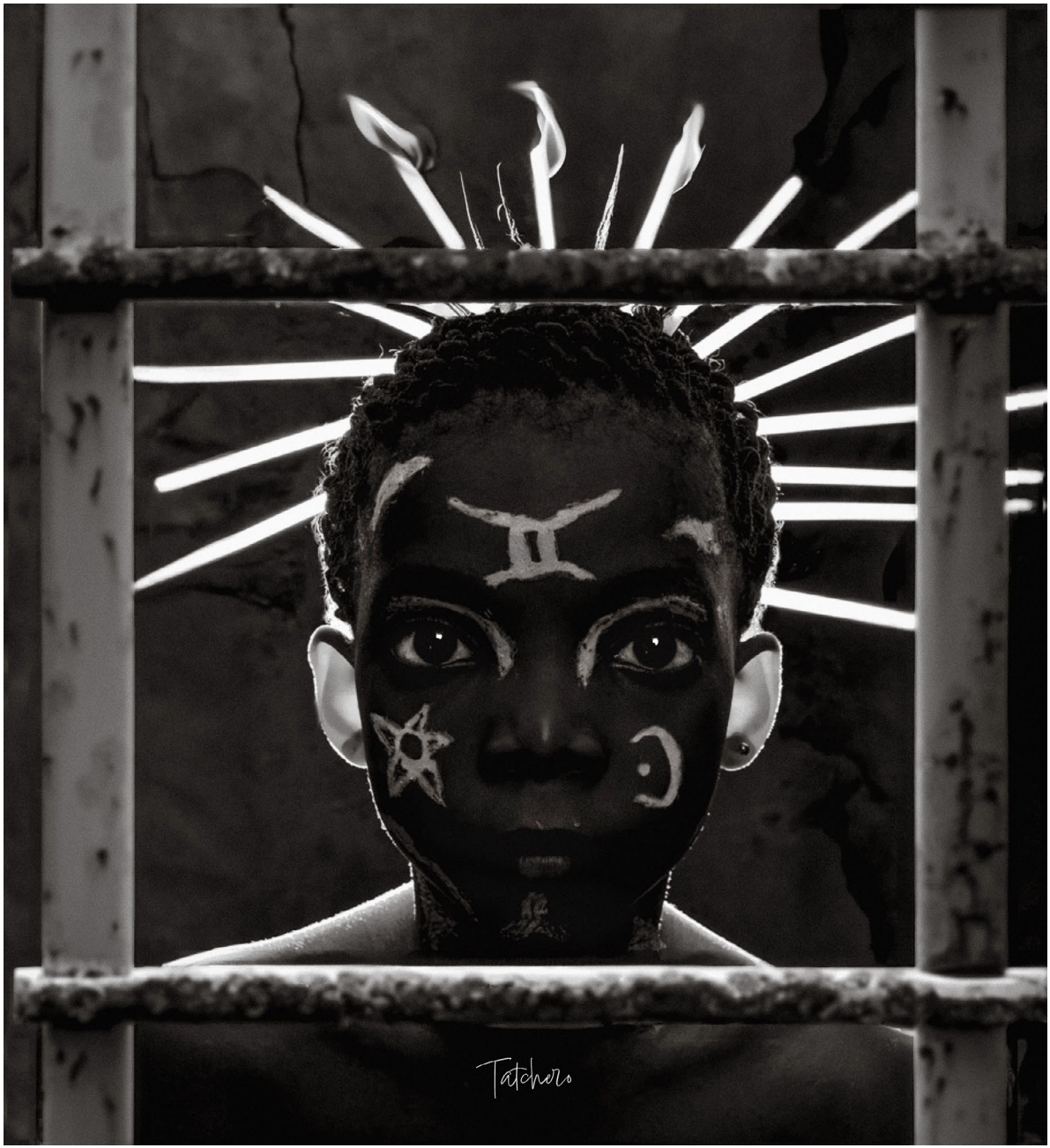
Our mission has never been just about photography—it has always been about people, about communities, about leaving something behind that is greater than an image.

This photograph was born out of one of those journeys deep into the riverine areas, places where life is as raw as the earth itself. Here, children grow up without access to clean water, toilets, or proper education. Yet, despite the weight of these challenges, they carry within them a fire—an unshakable spirit that refuses to be broken.

We would go into these communities, not just to document, but to create with them. Together, we built art—sometimes with nothing more than scraps, colors, and dreams. When these works were sold, every coin that came back became a lifeline: a well dug, a toilet built, a school supplied. That was the heart of the project—turning art into survival, creativity into change.

This image captures one of those dreamers. Look closely and you will see not just a figure ascending, but a symbol of every child who dares to rise despite the gravity of their circumstances. It is the story of hope climbing out of limitation, of beauty sprouting from hardship.

For me, “Dreamer's Ascent” is more than a photograph. It is a promise—that art will always serve humanity, that dreams, no matter how fragile, can ascend beyond the weight of the world.


Tatchero

This image was taken in one of the riverine communities, a place where dreams often feel caged by circumstance. The children here grow up surrounded by limitations—poverty, lack of education, scarce opportunities. And yet, within their eyes, you see it: a light that refuses to die, a spirit that longs to soar.

When I captured this shot, I didn't just see a child. I saw a soul—radiant, restless, longing to break free. It was as though the very sky was calling, yet invisible chains held them bound. That is what inspired the title: "The Celestial Captive."

Look at the image closely. You'll notice the tension—the beauty of what could be, fighting against the weight of what is. It is the universal struggle of every dreamer born in the wrong place, under the wrong conditions, but still carrying the right spirit.

To me, this photograph is not just art. It is a mirror. It asks us: how many children across the world are radiant stars, trapped by cages they never built? And more importantly, what role can we play in breaking those chains?

I hope "The Celestial Captive" ignites something within you—a reminder that the human spirit was never meant to be bound. That even in the harshest circumstances, the light of hope shines, waiting for a chance to ascend.

Tatchoro

This piece explores a theory I hold close—that Africans, no matter the distance or diaspora, share a profound, unbroken connection. Blood, memory, spirit—all intertwined. I wanted to translate that invisible bond into something visual, something you could feel just by looking.

To do this, I turned to the language of Adinkra symbols. Born from the Gyaman people of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, these symbols are more than just designs. They are carriers of philosophy, history, and truth—once stamped on royal cloth and now found across the world. They are Africa speaking to itself.

In this work, each symbol was chosen with purpose. The Adinkrahene, a mark of authority and leadership, stands tall as a reminder of the strength that unites us. The Duafe, a wooden comb symbol, embodies patience, care, and love—the gentle qualities that balance our power. Together, they remind us that African identity is both fierce and tender, both leader and nurturer.

This image is not just about culture—it's about connection. It whispers that our ancestors left us more than blood; they left us codes, visual truths that link us across borders and generations. Whether in Ghana, Nigeria, Jamaica, Brazil, or beyond, these truths remain, etched into our spirit.

"Blood Counterparts" is a visual testimony—that though we may be scattered, we are never truly apart. Our heritage is alive, speaking in symbols, in stories, in the very rhythm of who we are.

This piece is drawn from *The Women's War* project, a film and photography series honoring the courage of women who stood against oppression. To capture this image, we didn't just press record or click a shutter—we endured, we struggled, we became part of the story ourselves.

The shoot was chaos in the best and worst ways. At one point, our microphone was ruined because we waded into the water with it, determined not to lose the shot. My phone— our "camera"— was tied to a bamboo stick, shaking in the wind, pretending to be a drone. The women, our warriors, braved the freezing water again and again, each time rising with strength and defiance that no chill could break.

The experience tested everything: patience, creativity, resilience. But that's what made it so powerful. It wasn't polished studio lights or perfect equipment that gave this image life. It was the rawness— the cold water, the broken tools, the burning will to honor their story.

And when the project was complete, the world responded. The film and images traveled across Africa, winning awards and touching hearts, because they carried something beyond aesthetics— they carried truth. The truth of women who fought, suffered, and refused to be silenced.

"Reconnaissance" is more than an image; it's a memory etched in struggle, a tribute born in discomfort and perseverance. It is proof that storytelling is not about the tools you hold, but the fire that drives you to create.

Tatchero

At the time, I was just stepping into the photography scene, and the whispers around me were loud: “You can’t create anything meaningful with an iPhone.” Some laughed, some doubted, and many dismissed. But I’ve never been one to bow to the crowd.

Instead, I leaned into the challenge. I picked up my phone, called a few trusted friends, and told them: “We’re going to create something unforgettable—something that will silence the doubt.” Their faith in me fueled the fire. Together, we gathered props, styled a set, and breathed life into a vision that existed only in my head.

What emerged was “Pedals on Petals”—an image that felt both fragile and rebellious, delicate yet unshakable. It wasn’t just about aesthetics; it was about proving a point. About showing that artistry comes from imagination, not equipment.

The ultimate validation came when the image found a home beyond my own portfolio—it became the cover for a music album. A piece that began as a personal statement grew into a public symbol, reaching people who may never know the story behind it, but who feel its energy all the same.

For me, this photograph stands as a reminder: the world will always try to measure your worth by their standards, but true artistry is measured by how boldly you create against the odds.

Artists Interview - Tatchero

"Tatchero" is the name for a team, the shared identity of a sometimes fairly large group of people. How does that work?

Tatchero is more than a team—it's a movement built on shared purpose. At our core, we're a collective of visual storytellers, filmmakers, photographers, and community builders who believe that impact doesn't depend on expensive tools but on intent. The structure is flexible. We have a small, consistent circle

that drives creative direction, production, and research—but beyond that, our team expands depending on the project. For example, when we document historical stories like *The 1929 Women's War*, we collaborate with historians, local artisans, and costume designers from the communities involved. When we focus on advocacy projects in underserved riverine areas, we bring in local youth, volunteers, and creative educators.

The idea of working as a team came naturally. In Nigeria, where access to resources is often limited, collaboration becomes survival — and art becomes a shared language. We realized early that our vision was bigger than any one individual, so we built Tatchero as a space where collective creativity could thrive. Everyone contributes their strength—photography, film, styling, research, storytelling—and together, we shape narratives that bridge art and activism.

Most groups share the decisions and the work, but have a leader who takes phone calls, pitches, and complaints. Is that you?

When there's a big exhibition, a collaboration request, or logistics to handle, Ella, David, or I (Gabriel) interface with partners, galleries, or the media. But the magic of Tatchero is that no one shines alone. Each image, each film, each project you see carries the fingerprints of many people—stylists, researchers, community members, even kids who help us carry gear in rural villages. We operate more like a creative ecosystem than a hierarchy. Everyone has a voice, and decisions flow through open conversations. My role is more of a coordinator and vision-keeper—making sure our ideas stay aligned with the heart of why we started: to use art as a tool for education, advocacy, and connection. So yes, I might pick up the calls—but the heartbeat of Tatchero belongs to everyone who believes in what we're building.

Much of what North Americans "know" of Africa is stereotype. What should we know to appreciate your work most fully?

You're right—there's still so much the world doesn't see or understand about Africa, and even less about Nigeria beyond the headlines. Our stories are layered with resilience, history, and beauty, but also with the reality of what it means to create in a place where art isn't always seen as essential. When we travel to rural areas to tell real stories, we face much more than creative challenges—from malaria outbreaks to lack of immediate medical care. We've even faced real physical risks in the field—from illness to snake bites—yet those moments remind us that our art extends beyond aesthetics; it's a calling. We want people to understand that our work is built on persistence, purpose, and deep love for our people. When you look at our images or films, know that every frame carries both beauty and battle—a testament to creating light even where systems fail to provide it.

Tatchero is all about mobile photography. How did that happen? Evolution, experimentation, rebellion?

Mobile photography wasn't a planned choice — it began out of necessity and eventually became our voice. We started with an iPhone 5s, long before "mobile photography" became a recognized genre. At the time, it wasn't about equipment; it was about survival, expression, and finding beauty in what we had. We had never used professional cameras before—not because we didn't want to, but because we simply couldn't afford them. But over time, we realized that limitation became our strength—it forced us to see differently: to focus on composition, emotion, and light rather than tools.

Of course, there are challenges—low-light situations, limited lens options, and file depth—but creativity has always been our best equipment. We rely mostly on natural light, often improvising with reflective surfaces or household objects. In post-production, we use tools like Lightroom Mobile and Snapseed, not to perfect, but to *preserve* the feeling we captured. Over the years, what started as "just iPhone photography" has become a philosophy: that storytelling doesn't depend on what's in your hand, but on what's in your heart and how you see. The camera—whatever it is—only follows your vision.

The road to being an artist is long. It probably doesn't have an end, but there's always a beginning. How did it start for you?

Photography specifically for me, as Gabriel, began as an escape—not a career path, not even a dream—just a way to breathe again after losing a parent. Grief has a strange way of making everything around you feel muted, So one day, I picked up my iPhone 5s and started walking, photographing anything that felt alive—laughter in markets, children chasing tires, the chaos and calm of everyday life. Every night, I'd sit quietly

at the far end of my room, scrolling through those images. There was something healing about them — the joy, the movement, the freedom in faces that weren't carrying my kind of pain. It grounded me. And I remember thinking, "If this can help me heal, maybe it can help someone else too." That's where Tatchero's journey truly began. Life has a funny way of circling back. What began as a coping mechanism became a calling — a way to turn pain into purpose and storytelling into healing.

Most of us did not have an arts-connected first career. Talk about your timeline. Self-employment? A corporate treadmill?

Personally, I've been many things—but nowhere near art, at least not officially. My timeline reads like someone who was chasing logic but kept bumping into creativity. I studied Infrastructural Management Services (Computer Hardware and Software), Computer Engineering, Marine Engineering, Psychology—and at one point, I even flirted with the idea of becoming a helicopter pilot! My last corporate job was in the oil and gas sector as an Instrumentation Controls Engineer. It was stable, structured, and respectable—everything society tells you to want. But something inside me knew I was built for something different, something to be felt rather than measured. So, I quit.

Through it all, the only constant was my iPhone. No matter where I went—offshore rigs, training centers, or classrooms—that little device was always in my pocket, quietly waiting to pull me back to what truly moved me. Looking back, I think art had been whispering all along; I was just too focused on "practical" careers to listen.

The decision to quit changed everything. Once I allowed myself to focus fully on photography, learning became a joy—not an obligation. I'd spend hours experimenting, failing, discovering, and documenting. And before I even realized it, teaching others started to come naturally. What began as me sharing my curiosity became a mission to show others that creativity can come from anywhere—even from someone who once wanted to fix circuits, not capture souls.

Mobile photography found its first home online. What role do social media play in your practice? How do you use the Internet?

For us, "finished" isn't just when the image is printed or posted—it's when it serves its purpose. Our projects are designed to educate, preserve culture, and inspire action. So, a piece truly feels finished when it finds its way into classrooms, exhibitions, or conversations that spark awareness and change. Social media plays a huge role in amplifying that reach. It's our global gallery—a space where anyone, regardless of location or status, can access our work. Platforms like Instagram and X (Twitter) allow us to share our stories in real time, build community, and connect with people who might never step into a traditional gallery.

We also use the Internet as an archive—a digital museum of sorts. Our online presence preserves not just images but the histories, emotions, and lessons behind them. It allows educators and cultural institutions to integrate our visual stories into curriculums, discussions, and research. While we love seeing our work printed large and hanging on walls, we also find

deep meaning in seeing it used—by a teacher explaining history to children, or a student discovering pride in their heritage through one of our projects. In that sense, the Internet doesn't just host our art—it extends its life.

Tatchero also teaches, both online and in person. What's that like for you? Rewarding? Exhausting?

Teaching and mentoring have become some of the most fulfilling parts of our journey. What started as sharing a few tips with curious friends grew into something much larger—a movement centered on accessibility, creativity, and belief in self.

We've always said that art shouldn't depend on expensive tools; it should depend on purpose. So, when we teach—whether online, in classrooms, or through our free community workshops across Nigeria and Tanzania—our goal is to show young creatives that their stories matter, and that their phones can be powerful instruments for change. Seeing someone's confidence shift when they realize they can create something beautiful with what they already have—that's priceless. The only downside is emotional—seeing so much potential limited by lack of access. But that pain keeps us building spaces where creativity and opportunity can meet.

What do you look for in new work you encounter? As judges, are you a tough sell?

When we encounter new work, the first thing we look for isn't perfection—it's honesty. We want to feel something. Technical brilliance is beautiful, but emotion and intention are what truly move us. If a photograph or film can hold silence, stir questions, or make us pause and reflect, then it's done its job. We're drawn to work that tells stories—especially those that challenge stereotypes, preserve culture, or spark conversations about identity, history, or community.We love pieces that feel alive—where you can sense the artist's breath, their struggle, their joy, their rebellion.

Are we a tough sell? Maybe just a tad little, not because we seek perfection, but because we crave sincerity. We avoid anything that feels hollow or detached from purpose. Art shouldn't just decorate; it should communicate. Even if it's playful or experimental, it should mean something.You can tell when an artist is creating for validation versus creating from truth. We always lean toward the latter. As curators, we try to amplify stories that are often overlooked—work that reflects courage, vulnerability, or a new way of seeing the familiar. We're particularly drawn to African narratives told by Africans, in our own voices, without the filter of what the world expects Africa to look like.

What about when you've been judged? How have your projects been received? Most must "like/love/wow" your work.

Yes, people often express love or admiration for our work, but the most meaningful reactions are the emotional ones—the moments when the art speaks louder than words.During our Women's War Exhibition, for instance—a project that revisited the 1929 Aba Women's War, one of the most powerful yet overlooked moments in Nigerian history—we witnessed something unforgettable. Many of the women who came to see the exhibition were moved to tears. Some saw their grandmothers' stories reflected on the walls; others felt the weight of history that had been buried for too long. That

experience reaffirmed why we do what we do. It reminded us that our work isn't just about visuals—it's about remembrance, healing, and reclaiming the stories that history tried to forget. When art moves someone to tears, you know it has done its job.

Socially-conscious art is usually controversial. Have you ever been censored? Offended someone in authority?

Oh yes—trouble seems to find us every now and then. Our work often takes us into communities where cameras are not exactly welcome, especially when the stories touch on sensitive social or political issues. Once, while documenting a rural community's struggle with unsafe water and sanitation—part of a larger body of work advocating for clean water access—some local authorities mistook us for journalists trying to "expose" them. Let's just say...we had to pack up faster than we planned.

We've also faced quieter forms of censorship—being overlooked for opportunities simply because we use an iPhone. It's funny how the tool we use to tell stories can sometimes make people uncomfortable. But that's okay—art that challenges comfort is often the kind that needs to exist. Every "please leave" moment reminds us that we're documenting truths worth defending.

Where do good ideas come from? How does creativity "in committee" work for you? Do you ever hit a wall?

Our creativity is deeply rooted in observation and emotion—the world around us constantly feeds us ideas. Much of our inspiration comes from real people, history, and the quiet poetry of everyday African life—the faces, the chaos, the calm, the rhythm of survival and joy intertwined. Late nights are our magic hours; when the world slows down, ideas flow more freely, and silence becomes our collaborator. Early mornings on the other hand, act as our natural remedy—a time

to realign with people, nature, and purpose. They help us listen—not just to the world, but to ourselves. Music sometimes joins the process too—some Afrobeats when we need energy, silence when we need focus, and the hum of Port Harcourt rain when we just need to feel.

Absolutely—we get blocked. Anyone who says they don't might not be creating deeply enough. For us, creative block isn't failure; it's a pause that asks for honesty. There are moments when an image doesn't come together, or a story refuses to unfold—and rather than forcing it, we step back. Sometimes we walk away from the work entirely. Other times, we sit with the community that inspired it again, or revisit the emotion that birthed the idea. That reconnection usually shows us what went missing.

Many of our strongest works began as fragments we once abandoned. The difference was time—it let us return with new eyes and softer egos. When we do get stuck, we remind ourselves why we started: not to impress, but to express—not to create perfect art, but purposeful art. That resets everything. And the "secret," if there is one, is this: we don't chase originality; we chase sincerity. Because when the story is true, originality finds its way back.

Teachers, mentors, or boosters who deserve a shout out for contributing, past or present, to your success?

First, we must begin with the greatest teacher of all—the Creator of the universe. The way nature designs, the way light plays across riverine fields, the cycles of seasons, the geometry in decay—all of that is curriculum to us. Then there's our mum—her strength, her stories, her grace. Her belief in us, even when the tools were few, built the foundation for everything we now make with a phone, a dream, and persistence.

Beyond family and faith, we're guided by photographers whose work is deeply rooted in Africa—artists who show that storytelling can be both personal and revolutionary. **Uche Okpa-Iroha**, through *Invisible Borders*, reminds us that photography can be a form of migration—a bridge between what is seen and what is felt. **Samuel Fosso** shows how identity can be many voices in one frame, teaching us that the camera can be both mirror and mask. **Jenevieve Aken's** focus on womanhood and vulnerability reflects the emotional honesty we strive for. **Ruth Ossai** celebrates community and everyday beauty, showing that the ordinary can be sacred. These artists remind us that to create is to resist—and to resist is to remember.

Will generative AI find a place in your practice?

AI has definitely shaken the creative world—and for good reason. But for us, we don't see it as a threat; we see it as a tool, another brush in the box. Our work has always been about accessibility—proving that you don't need expensive tools to create impact. So, in that same spirit, we approach AI as something that can expand storytelling, not erase it.

We're already exploring ways AI can help us re-imagine history, restore lost visuals, or build educational resources that reach more people. But the heart of our art—the observation,

the human connection, the emotion—that still belongs to us. AI can simulate images, but it can't feel the dust of Port Harcourt streets, the laughter of children by the river, or the silence of a mother's strength. That's where we live—in the texture of real life.
So yes, AI will find a place in our practice, but never at the cost of our humanity. It's a collaborator, not a replacement and we also believe the best way to humanize AI is to infuse it with purpose—to make technology serve culture, not the other way around.

"YCN" is your crypic title for this collection. Explain?

"I have functioned from a place of a thousand "You Can Nots" (YCN) and with each discouragement, I mustered strength and courage. "You cannot do photography with a phone," they said. "No one is going to hire you," they said. "You are wasting your time, get a life," they said. "Your phone pictures will never make it to any art gallery," they said. With each YCN, I gained a lot of experience and skill. With each YCN, the commitment, confidence, and consistency grew. So, I present to you: Zeptoseconds of my Journey as a smart phone.

What's next for Tatchero? A new project? A show? Anything we can help you publicize?

What's next for us is bigger than a single project—it's a lifelong mission. We're building the largest visual archive of African stories told by Africans—a living repository that will preserve history, celebrate culture, and ensure that future generations understand where we've come from.

We're also in the research and pre-production phase of a new film project rooted in African identity, resilience, and collective memory—an ambitious work we hope to one day see premiere on global platforms.

In 2022, I co-founded *The Journey*, an annual photography and film exhibition in Port Harcourt that has since grown into Lagos and beyond. It brings together thousands of people—artists, thinkers, and everyday community members—into a space where stories are shared, not just seen. The exhibition is more than a showcase; it is a dialogue. Proceeds fund clean water and toilets in underserved communities, turning art into a direct agent of change.

The Journey exhibition remains at the heart of what we do, and we're expanding it across the continent to foster collaboration, cultural dialogue, and creative exchange. From Port Harcourt to Lagos. From Nairobi to New York. We're taking this movement wherever stories need to be seen.

Stay in touch with Tatchero
https://linktr.ee/tatchero

Not-for-profit, non-advertising, *Dek Unu Magazine* promotes accomplished, adventurous fine art photography internationallly in eleven print and online editions each year. The magazine provides extraordinary creative freedom to our artists but we depend on print sales and donations to pay for the registrations, licenses, and subscriptions required to turn out each month's issue. To donate in any amount, please find us at: PayPal (@dekunuarts) or Dek Unu Arts, 1618 San Silvestro Drive, Venice, FL 34285
Thank you for your support!

https://www.dekunumag.com
https://www.dekunuarts.com

©*Dek Unu Magazine*, a division of Dek Unu Arts,
1618 San Silvestro Drive, Venice, Florida 34285, United States of America.
Dek Unu Magazine, @2017-2025 Dek Unu Arts, all rights reserved. Unless noted, copyright for included images are owned by each artist and used by permission.

Dek Unu Magazine is published online at https://www.dekunumag.com and in print on demand through Magcloud, a division of Blurb, Inc. Please see guidelines for submissions at https://www.dekunumag.com/submit and direct questions regarding the publication process to dekkunumag@gmail.com. Other correspondence: dekunu@dekunumag.com.

Dek Unu Arts

Dek Unu Magazine

©2025 Venice, Florida
All Rights Reserved